

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 18-2004

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on December 6, 2004, commencing at 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Hildreth, Chair; Partington, Regional Chair; Almas; Angelone; Bailey; Baty; Casselman; Katzman; Marshall; Mastroianni.

Staff: Mr. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Mr. Ventresca, Acting Commissioner of Community Services; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Part-time: Ms. Heidebrecht, Director, Children's Services; Mr. Hunter, Acting Director, Seniors Services; Mr. Hutchings, Director, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities; Ms. Stewart, Manager, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities.

PRESENTATION

217. Community Participation Incentive Funding:
A Community Based Survey of Ontario Works Recipients

Stephanie Baker Collins, Gracia Janes and Susan Venditti were in attendance to apprise Committee and Council of the Community Participation Incentive funding's investment in a community based survey of Ontario Works (OW) recipients. The purpose of the survey was to determine the quality of life for Ontario Works recipients and the barriers they face in working towards financial independence and in experiencing a good quality of life. 82% of Ontario Works recipients rate their lives as stressful and more likely to relate their health status as worse than adequate. Inadequacy of benefits is further demonstrated in the respondents' experiences of an inadequate food supply. 62% of respondents said they had experienced a time in the last year when there was not enough food to eat. The greatest hope for the future of the respondents is to find a good paying job and get off Ontario Works and to provide a better life for their children.

Reports on the Community Based Survey of Ontario Works Recipients "Building Skills and Understanding Barriers" will be distributed to Committee members and

a copy will be available in the Clerk's Office for those that would like to read the report.

218. Moved by Councillor Angelone
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That Report COM 86-2004, December 6, 2004, respecting Community Participation Incentive Funding: A Community Based Survey of Ontario Works Recipients, be received; and

That a letter be forwarded to the Ministry reiterating Regional Council's position on the National Child Benefit and regarding the inadequacies of benefits to Ontario Works recipients.

Carried.

CLERK'S OFFICE – COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

219. Procedure to Select the
Committee Chair and Vice-Chair
of each of the Standing Committees

Peter Partington, Regional Chair, called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Community Services Committee.

Moved by Councillor Marshall
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That Councillor Hildreth be nominated for the position of Chair of the Community Services Committee.

Carried.

The Regional Chair called a second and third time for nominations for the position of Chair of the Community Services Committee.

Moved by Councillor Baty
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That nominations for the position of Chair of the Community Services Committee be closed.

Carried.

There being no other nominations, Regional Chair Partington, with the agreement of Councillor Hildreth, declared her Chair of the Community Services Committee.

The Regional Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee.

Moved by Councillor Katzman
Seconded by Councillor Hildreth

That Councillor Marshall be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee.

Carried.

The Regional Chair called a second and third time for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee.

Moved by Councillor Mastroianni
Seconded by Councillor Hildreth

That nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee be closed.

Carried.

There being no other nominations, Regional Chair Partington, with the agreement of Councillor Marshall, declared him Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee.

Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Angelone

That Report CSD 174-2004, December 8, 2004, respecting the selection of the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair for each of the Standing Committees, be received.

Carried.

(Report CSD 174-2004 is behind Joint Reports Tab in the Blue Book.)

220. Day and Time of Regular
Meetings for Standing Committees

Moved by Councillor Marshall
Seconded by Councillor Bailey

That Report CSD 175-2004, December 8, 2004, respecting Day and Time of Regular Meetings for Standing Committees, be received.

That regular meetings of the Community Services Committee be held on Monday at 3:00 p.m. in accordance with a schedule approved, from time to time, by Regional Council.

That special meetings be held at such times and such places as may be appropriate, pursuant to the provisions of the procedural by-law.

Carried.

(Report CSD 175-2004 is behind Joint Reports Tab in Blue Book.)

ADMINISTRATION

221. Core Service Review Process and Results to Date

Mr. Trojan provided a brief overview of Report CAO 26-2004 outlining the results of the work that has been completed to date as well as an outline for the steps required to complete the review of Core Services. The report highlighted the environmental scan information compiled to date, community consultation efforts and the Council planning process. Staff has proposed some recommended next steps to ensure that Council's priorities identified through the most recent planning exercise are reflected in the services delivered by the Region.

2005 Budget Prioritization Process Update

Mr. Trojan highlighted Report CAO 27-2004 providing the results of the work that has been completed to date, as part of the 2005 Current Budget process. Two options for achieving 2005 budget targets are included in the report for council consideration. The options have been developed from the information available from the ongoing Core Services Review. Each scenario has identified the financial and service related impacts and risks associated with it. The other recommendation in the report related to the budget is that the multi-year financial plan be updated following adoption of any changes to the Council Business Planning document to ensure proper alignment.

2005 Budget Adjustment Update Community Services Department

Mr. Ventresca, Acting Commissioner, Community Services, provided a summary of the Community Services Department budget review process. Participation in the 2005 Budget Reduction exercise resulted in total reductions of \$1,186,032. A longstanding shortfall in provincial funding for the Region's Children's Services precludes any reductions in the 2005 budget. Community Services met the target assigned by the Corporate Management Team, contributing its share of the reductions to help achieve the overall 5% increase.

Preliminary budget increase – 4.53%

Revised budget increase – 2.39%

Costs incurred from provincially operated programs (i.e. ODSP) which accounted for all of original 4.53% increase has been absorbed through budget reductions in regionally operated areas and primarily through use of reserves. Service levels to clients have not been reduced.

Reduction of reserves from all three program/service areas increase program/service vulnerability and the prospect of a future increase in Regional contribution if Social Assistance costs escalate during any economic downturn, or if Children's and Seniors experience unplanned revenue losses or expenditure increases.

222. Moved by Councillor Marshall
Seconded by Councillor Katzman

That the presentation by Mr. Ventresca, Acting Commissioner, Community Services, regarding 2005 Budget Adjustment Update Community Services Department be received and referred for consideration with the overall consolidated budget.

Carried.

223. Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That Report CAO 26-2004, respecting Core Services Review Process and Results to Date, be received and referred to Council for decision.

Carried.

(Report CAO 26-2004 is behind the Joint Reports Tab in the Blue Book.)

224. Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That Report CAO 27-2004, December 2, 2004, respecting 2005 Budget Prioritization Process Update, be received and referred to Council for decision.

Carried.

(Report CAO 27-2004 is behind the Joint Reports Tab in the Blue Book.)

225. Permissive Grant Policy

A discussion ensued regarding the Permissive Grant Policy and Committee expressed their concerns on what the definition for permissive grant should be given the varied requests for funding this budget year. Upon review of Report CSD 164-2004, previously presented at the December 2nd Budget Review Committee, it was:

Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Regional Chair Partington

That Report CSD 164-2004, December 2, 2004, Permissive Grants Policy, be received for information; and

That Regional Council reaffirm its position on the “no grants” policy and deal with requests individually.

Carried.

(Report CSD 164-2004 attached to Report 8-2005 Budget.)

JOINT REPORTS

226. Early Learning and Child Care
“Best Start” Provincial Announcement

Moved by Councillor Mastroianni
Seconded by Councillor Casselman

That Report COM 83-2004/PHD 84-2004, December 6, 2004, respecting Early Learning and Child Care “Best Start” Provincial Announcement, be received for information.

Carried.

(Report COM 83-2004/PHD 84-2004 is behind the Joint Reports Tab in the Blue Book.)

227. Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs)

Moved by Councillor Baty
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That Report PHD 87-2004/COM 84-2004, December 6, 2004, respecting Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) be received and forwarded to Council for decision.

That staff explore opportunities for consultation with other LHIN network areas to determine any mutual concerns related to the Ministry's LHIN network area map and its Healthcare transformation agenda; and

That the Region work closely with the Niagara District Health Council and Niagara Health System to ensure local health care issues are known and addressed; and

That the LHIN Information Session in Niagara include invitations to the Niagara District Health Council, Niagara Health System and relevant regional and municipal stakeholders.

Carried.

(Report PHD 87-2004/COM 84-2004 is behind Joint Reports Tab in Blue Book.)

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT (continued)

228. Redevelopment of Long-Term Care Homes
Non-Compliant Beds: Final Report

Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Katzman

That Report COM 85-2004, December 6, 2004, respecting Redevelopment of Long-Term Care Homes Non-Compliant Beds: Final Report, be received for information.

Carried.

229. Ontario Disability Support Program
(ODSP) Demographic Data

Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Katzman

That Report COM 87-2004, December 6, 2004, respecting Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Demographic Data, be received for information.

Carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

230. Joint Reports

Councillor Katzman commented that dealing with joint reports at more than one committee appears to be a waste of time and asked if this matter was being examined. Councillor Baty advised that a report will be coming forward in the New Year regarding Committee structure and recommendations for consideration at that time.

ADJOURNMENT

Committee adjourned at 4:45 p.m. to meet again on Monday, January 10, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. in Committee Room 4, Regional Headquarters Building.

Jill Hildreth
Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Pam Gilroy
Regional Clerk
/Associate Director of Corporate Strategy